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The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee charged Friday deliberate security leaks are so rampant they are 'sapping the strength' of U.S. leaders and inhibiting them from taking actions that require secrecy.

Sen. David Durenberger, R-Minn., said the leaks have hit a record high and his committee is considering criminal penalties and the use of lie detector tests as part of an overall program to stamp out unauthorized disclosures.

'The cumulative impact of this misuse of leaks is to inhibit national leaders from taking measures that require secrecy for their success,' the committee chairman said,

'That is a terrible and intolerable outcome,' he said. 'An unwillingness to take risks could prove fatal in a future crisis.'

'Every administration has faced the problem of leaks, but none as much as this one,' Durenberger said in a speech prepared for delivery to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

Durenberger said 'disclosure of highly classified information - especially the deliberate leaking of intelligence information that compromises sensitive sources and methods -- is sapping the strength of our national leaders.'

'It is hurting our credibility with our allies,' Durenberger added. 'It is unnecessarily complicating relations with our adversaries. And, it is harming the morale and effectiveness of our dedicated men and women in our own intelligence agencies,' Durenberger said.

He added that President Reagan and CIA Director William Casey are 'frustrated' by the leaks.

Durenberger also said the Intelligence Committee is 'deeply upset' because those in the administration who oppose congressional oversight of intelligence activities blame Congress for the leaks.

He called for a new 'ethic of silence' among those entrusted with the most sensitive national secrets and said the media must assume its share of the blame for the leaks because 'generally, the news media are all too willing to be used in return for information.'

Durenberger said the Intelligence Committee is 'prepared to consider a proposal to deal with criminal penalties for leaks of highly classified information' but said such a statute must provide 'room for public discussion of intelligence community failures.'

He said the committee is also considering 'whether the time has come for Congress to give the Defense Department a long-term statutory framework to implement a tightly controlled program for polygraph examinations employees in the most sensitive positions.'